(d) and (e) The table above indicates increasing pattern in the Central assistance provided to the State since creation of the State in 2000-01. The assistance is subject to availability and utilisation of funds. Besides, the State share for North Eastern region, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal has been reduced during 2004-05 to ten per cent from the earlier 25 per cent under the Integrated Forest Protection Scheme.

Threat to wildlife habitat

923. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently some 40 wildlife organizations and environmentalists have represented to Government that the threat to wildlife habitats in the country is on the increase;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken to protect India's wildlife?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Forest land and wildlife habitat are protected by various laws including the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. All cases of diversion and use of forest as well as wildlife habitats for non forestry purposes are regulated under the provisions of these laws and the orders of Hon'ble Supreme Court issued from time to time. The cases are examined by the expert committees and decisions are taken after due consideration of laws and policies of the Government as well as the directives of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Mount Everest on danger list

924. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that conservationists have asked the UN to place Mount Everest on a danger list because its snow-cover is retreating rapidly; and

(b) if so, whether Government feel the need to make the civil society in India aware of latest development in climate changes and make its concern known world-wide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Mount Everest falls in the territory of Nepal and is a sovereign part of that country. The snow-cover and glacier studies of the Mount Everest are, therefore, the concern of the Government of Nepal.

(b) However, a number of important events have been organised in the counry like Eighth Conference of Parties (COP-8) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change in October-November 2002; Climate Technology Bazaar in November 2003 and 22nd Plenary Session of Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change in November, 2004, which have been helpful in making the civil society in India aware of latest developments in climate change. These events were duly covered by the Media.

National Environment Policy

925. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to finalize National Environment Policy during current year;

(b) if so, whether the new policy will do away with mandatory Central clearance for industrial investment proposals worth over Rs. 50 crores;

(c) whether over 40 activists have come together to protest Government's poor record in protecting wildlife from destructive development and commercial pressures;

(d) if so, whether they have demanded that people should have a greater say in decisions and critical wildlife and bio-diversity habitats be closed to large scale development projects; and

(e) if so, to what extent the new environmental policy will take care of all these suggestions?